

From Macmillan

CURRENTS

SPRING 1982

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Vol. 9 No. 1

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*Special Thanks to Bill Littlefield,
Marvin Mandell, and Green House.*

Our minds are lited
This is the vacuum

"You are the bows from which your children as living
arrows are sent forth." —Gibran

HURLING FROM THE BOW

A crooked arrow
dodging objects
that life hurls in disarray.

A book filled narrow
lodging subjects
on which others have their say.

A wingless sparrow
flying rejects
can only walk, tip and sway.

A newborn farrow
squealing protests
its eyes burn at first sight of day.

A bone's marrow
holding secrets
In fear of their display.

A crooked arrow
dodging objects
that life hurls in disarray.

Sally Brophy*

How Majestic you are,
all glowy creamy white.
You stick out above treetops,
At night you are one like the moon
over the horizon curve, far away.
Many great men are drawn to you
liberty you shine with
freedom, righteousness
you hold on your dome. A great place
you shall always be.

JMR

THE WORTH OF A SHREW

In the midst of all that has happened, I think that it's safe to say that I have overcome my mother's stick and learned how to love myself and my family. I can smooch my little pooches goodnight without a belt buckle behind my back ready to strike at the slightest snuffle. Oh, I really didn't mind being beaten as a child; I always knew it was for my own good, just as Mother said it was. Now, I have my sweet satisfaction everytime I visit Mother while she's being strapped into her bed and having the Jello wiped from her chin.

The first time I dropped in on Mother at the hospital, she glared at me as if to place blame on her only daughter. I stood there and thought about all of the horrors she had put me through, as I watched her wrinkled body writhe in the leather restraints, and stuck my tongue out at her. Edith, my mother, thrust her body up off her linens and wildly grunted like an angry wildebeest until the night nurse had to sedate her. I was kind of sorry that she fell asleep so quickly.

Once about a month after Edith was put away, my daughter Nellie and my son Peter asked me why they weren't allowed to visit Grandma in the sanitarium. I told them that the woman in the hospital really wasn't the grandmother that they remembered as children, and I kissed them goodnight thinking back on the time my mother slapped both children in the face for jumping up and down in the back seat of her car. Maybe the woman in the hospital was the same person Nellie and Peter remembered. I know I would never forget!

Jake, my husband, didn't have the glimmer of humor that I had when it came to dealing with Mother. He sat in the chair by her bed and watched me read her the paper or tell her about Nellie's new boyfriend or the poetry that Peter had begun to write. Once in a while Jake would jump out of his seat and yell, "Edith! You SPIT at her one more time and I'm going to have the doctor WIRE your goddamn teeth shut!" Then, she'd usually spit at him and he'd wait for me out in the lobby. Jake put up with a lot, back then.

Six years ago my brother, Alan, called to tell me that Mother was taken away in an ambulance because she hit her head on the sidewalk as she tried to pick up a tricycle and hit the child next door with it. Enraged, I told him to call me back when she was put away for good, I had had enough of her. Alan gave me a call four hours later to tell me there were some papers to be signed. Edith had seen the last of her home and un-armed citizens. I was stopped for speeding that night on the way to the lawyer's office.

Mother's fall damaged her speech. All she could manage to say the following week was "'et out, oo 'ucking 'iscrase! Dis is 'our 'ault!"

"What, Mother?" I said and tried not to grin as her face turned pink.

"Out! Out! 'ant oo 'ear me?"

"Alan, can you make out what she's saying?" I asked.

"She said you're a disgrace and it's your fault. Ah, well, we had better go. Sarah. I don't like the way she's looking at you," he said as he took my arm and led me out. "See you soon, Mother." That was the time I stuck my tongue out at her and said, "'ood bye, 'other!" Since then, her frustration stifled most of her speech and she began to communicate by spitting. At the beginning of her convalescence, I used to dream that Edith was standing over my bed turning her engagement ring around, ready to smack with the diamond facing me. On one of these occasions, I woke in a cold sweat and called the sanitarium to make sure that Mother hadn't gotten out of bed, hopped in a cab to come over and spit at me while screaming nasty vowels.

"That's sure funny that you should call, Dr. Freeling," Leroy, the night aid said to me as I continued to sweat into the phone. "It seems that your Mother figured out the restraints and locked herself in the drug closet. Don't worry, though, we've called security. They have the other set of keys."

"Oh, phew," I breathed, finally. "As long as she's safe. Thank you, Leroy." I went back to bed and dreamt about swimming in a blue pool with Esther Williams while fountains of diamond studded leather restraints were spewed everywhere.

On one of those rare moments of true solice, Mother asked to see "'eter an' 'ellie." Jake and I brought the kids to see her for the first time, and Mother smiled. Peter, being ten, wanted to know more about the electronics of her bed. Nellie, two years younger, just thought that Edith was gross.

"Doesn't anyone ever wipe her snots?" Nellie whined indignantly.

"Nellie!" I said. "Don't say that! It's rude!"

"Well, I just figured that if she can't really speak, how can she hear?"

Jake grabbed the kids, growled, and wiped the spit off of Nellie's cheek as both children cried out with nausea.

"There was no need for THAT!" I yelled at Edith, not disturbing the vegetable in the next bed.

"Oh, lay in da 'raffic," Mother grunted.

"You used that one on me thirty years ago! Can't you be a little more creative?" I asked while dodging flaming balls of phlegm.

I left and called Alan to jokingly tell him not to sell Mother's house yet; she was gaining her old self back.

Jake and I felt a little badly when my career forced us to move to the West Coast. Alan felt worse. Trish, Alan's wife, told us that she would never talk to us again if we didn't either take Edith with us to California or hand her over to the State. I found it amazing how speedily red tape could be overcome when there's a lawyer in the family. Alan said that if he took care of all his cases as fast as it took him to get rid of Mother, he would probably be rich. Trish lowered her eyes at him and smiled at Edith for the last time, and it didn't even have to be forced.

"Mother," I said quietly, after Alan, Trish, and Jake had left her dismal, stained and peeling room, "we'll be getting on a plane in the morning; me and Jake and the kids. I want you to know that Alan and I have made very good arrangements for you. It's just that we aren't able to look after you as much as before, so we got some people who will be with you always."

"'ullshit!"

"That's no way to talk! it won't be so bad, really it won't," I said, not even believing myself.

Edith looked right at me as small tears gathered in the lips of her tired eyes. I had never seen her cry before, and this was closest I would ever come. She looked at the straps that were scarring her wrists, and tensed up as I tried to loosen them.

I told her that we would all write from California and that Alan would be around every so often. She wasn't listening to me. She just stared out the window as a bird came and sat down on the window sill. For a second, I thought I saw her smile. She looked at me and then back at the bird.

"Oo will 'take me out for 'alks 'ow?"

"I'm sure the nurses in the state hospital will take you outside, Mother." She had such an innocent blank stare that glazed her whole face. I almost felt guilty about leaving. I was already thinking about what an awful place the new hospital would be and when I would be able to visit her again. She continued to stare at the bird, and when it flew away, Edith spat at the barred glass and pressed the button by her hand to shut the curtain around her bed.

Nancy R. Levey

Staring without intent,
Induced with my own thoughts,
Blacking out everything.

Speeding through space,
1 thought, 2 thoughts, 3 and 4.
Where am I.

Everything is so beautiful,
Colors and sights:
A field, a girl
A breeze blowing hair and brush.
A flower, a bee
A smell attracting flower and bee.
An ocean, a gull
A wave and feather rolling to shore
and returning.
Road, destination
A path leading east and west.
A candle, a flame
Colors focusing in and out.

Intense feeling, coming out, focus improving.
Reality: can I stand it?

Laurie Sanford



Photo by Bil Bonanno

STORMY DAYS

You came like spashing, stormy, salty sea,
Preparing me for days that soaked with you.
Like rocks you cover, leaving me not free,
The sea rose, drenching me in all you do.
The storm would cease and calmness should remain,
Our days ruffled by waves both good and bad.
A life with beaches being our domain,
Like sand and sea united, we then had.
We followed tides, they started their retreat,
Obscure were forces pulling them away.
It left our love and water their defeat,
To storms were due, the price we were to pay.
The empty beach I need in many ways,
I know that tides return on stormy days.

Peggy Strange

CHILD ABUSE

So now you know the truth:
I'm not perfect.
In fact I'm rather weak.
Just like your mother
who was perfect
as a mother
but weak
at surviving
as she slowly sipped and then
later
gluttenly gulped
her reality away
trading in
all her dreams
for a distilled numbness.

"Mama"
you cried
as she smothered her brain
and she screamed and she lied
to herself
and tried
to forget that there was
a life outside the quelled pain.

So now you look for the mother who deserted you
in women who open their hearts so wide
that you can see their weakness.
It is the weakness of your mother.
It is the "weakness" of all women.

You say, "go ahead
love me. See if you can get me
to love you back."

The tongue has venom.
The blood is cold.
Recoil.
And then attack!
"Mama, I got you back!"
But it is I with the teeth marks in her heart.

We all have a breaking point, my dear.
It's just that some of us are so fragile
we shatter with touch.

S. Jane Albert

OF APATHY

I saw it lying half dead (on the kennel floor)
It gave a painful yelp;
He was beaten hard and barely fed.
Could that have been a plea for help?
Had I been insensitive?
Do I care? Should I?

She sat alone in her room,
rocking in her chair.
Her better years behind her;
could I have left her alone in that room,
an atmosphere of gloomy despair?
Was she not human? Had she not a mind?
Had I been unkind?
Do I care? Should I?

Sounds of laughter broke the silence.
She was lame.
(thus the brace on her leg)
Yet they took as a fun game
—a joke at her expense.
Could I stop her crying?
Or was I one of them?
Could I have helped her to smile?
Do I care? Should I?

I saw him in pain,
could I see?
Should I help him, or would that be in vain?
I kneeled to hear what he had to say
and saw in his eye, his silent plea.
Had I been inhumane?
Do I care? Should I?

I heard him cry,
could I hear?
Or would I pass him by?
Was he crying of loneliness or of fear?
Did I cause my brother's tear?
Do I care? Should I?

Edward Gault

Paranoia breeding cities,
mass producing
what is for most an unseen cry.

The numbers float dead in the river.
Numbers that represent the futures that
will die.

Close your eyes,
close your ears,
to the metropolis,
the city of unseen fears.

Trample the dying past
for you are almost home at last.

The last step before you enter the call
could be the step before the fires of hell.

Chain yourself to the wall,
feel the crisis of identity.
Listen to the water drip into the sewers of
reality.

Close your eyes with a conscience that is
clear.
Arise, face the mirror,
and you will see the unseen fear.

Marc Maron

AN ODE TO THE WILD

(or: The Bird, the Beast, and the Human)

Drops of red
on a blanket of white snow
Beads of blood
leading to a bird (dead)
Its feathers torn by the wild
Teeth-marks in its flesh
Further on is the wild
(in the form of a wolf)
But it does not claim its prey
For it, too, is enslaved by death
(in the form of a piece of lead)
A bullet — man-made —
is embedded in its flesh
The wolf's mouth is open
Its eyes staring
All its dignity is gone
because of a bullet.
Here lies the wild (was once free)
Here lies a bird (could once fly)
This battlefield tells its own story.
Still further on is a man
coming towards the wild (now tamed)
he grins
Hey Jack — I got two birds
with one stone
Jack smiles — they walk on
leaving behind them two lives (dead)
the wolf (a beast)
a bird (just that)
This is a story about the beast
(it was just hungry)
a bird (oh — if it could only fly again)
and a human
(could kill two birds
with
one
stone)

Charlotte Mandell

DOUBTS

Whispering doubts are shouting in my head —
Should I do this or do that instead?

I look out the window
it's winter — it's cold
Looking for some warmth before I grow old...

Silent reminders penetrate so loud.
I have to find myself before I know —
just what I want — how I should live —
what I should take — what should I give?

The wintery morn — dark white storm,
reminds me of the life I don't need.
The skeletal trees — put me at ease —
hinting change is on its way...

Yesterday's clouds are tomorrow's snow —
made my mistakes a long time ago.
I'm paying now — giving all I owe,
Hope someday change will enter me....

Whispering doubts are shouting in my head —
I can't hold on — this feeling has spread.

I look at myself —
there is someone else I see —
inside my head lies a mystery.

Ice of yesterday bites my mind with a chill.
Brain so numb — my thoughts stand still.
The fire is on — the flame is healing me —
it's time to solve this silent mystery.

Yesterday's clouds are tomorrow's snow —
made my mistakes a long time ago.
I'm paying now — giving all I owe,
I guess a change has found its way by me.

John Boyle

Grandma G.
How wonderful was she.
Always on the go
And, of course,
Never said no.

A talker
A listener
A woman who knew her stuff.
Could handle anything
Smooth or rough.

I love you
Do you hear me?
I love you
I say.
Although you're gone,
My love for you grows deeper
Every day.

Lori Tvert

TOY BOX

I wish I could stop,
This whirlwind of doubts.
She's a spinning glass top,
Speaking only in shouts.

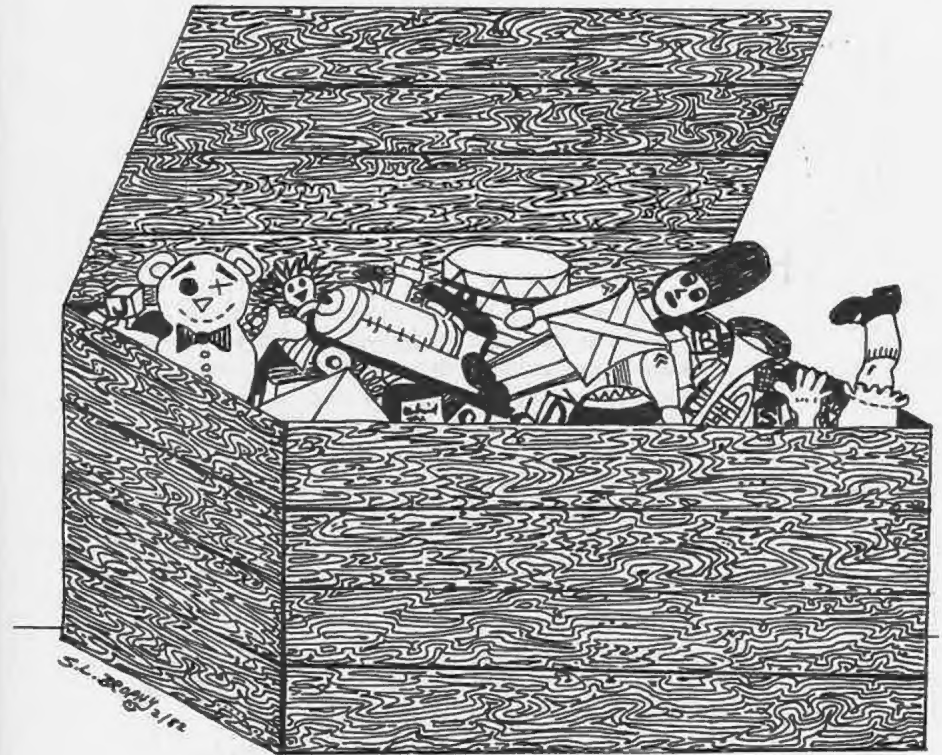
I'd like to put my finger,
On the center piece,
The spinning would slowly linger,
Then finally cease.
She'd know that she's glass,
and she can see if she tries
to realize at last,
that we do hear her cries.

She's a spinning glass top,
Speaking only in shouts:
THE PAIN'S GOT TO STOP!
LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT!

I've tried to show her,
That it doesn't have to hurt,
But her past still endures.
The top spins and spews dirt,
Soiled memories of pain.
Trying to escape in her toy box,
But there's nothing to gain
When your love is the cost.

I wish I could stop,
This whirlwind of doubts.
She's a spinning glass top,
Speaking only in shouts...
THE PAIN'S GOT TO STOP!
LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT!
She's a spinning glass top,
Speaking only in doubts.

Sally Brophy*



HER SECRET

She carries the weight of the world on her shoulders
Growing wiser as she grows older
She holds a magical mystery
Of man's fate and his history
A beholding of beauty to our eyes
Yet a powerful queen in disguise
At times she is warmth and refreshment
She often seems to be heavensent
Lying still, obscure, and ambiguous
She throws a magnetism and intrigue to us
— A friend, an enemy, a mistress —
She's created happiness, sorrow, and distress
Never subject to slumber, yet woven many a dream
We've made love and made war in her stream
Who is she? — You know for she rules you
You and all others, too.
Yet, how many winds are to weave through my mast
Til I discover her secret at last!

Sally Maloney

SWEET DREAMS

I've held you close and felt the smoothness of your skin.
While you sleep I trace the curves of your body.
Watching your unconscious movements fascinates me.
When you sleep you're no longer a man, but a boy nestled
Between the sheets and the blankets.

Your warmth creates feelings inside of me,
Sometimes I just can't find the words to explain.
I know you're a man who needs freedom,
And I am the woman who releases the tension.

Now as I watch you toss and turn through the night,
I've come to realize that the little boy in you will never die.
I love kissing your cheek while you sleep,
Probably because you'll never know it's being done.

In the morning when you wake
You reach for my waist and cuddle so tight.
The smile on your face is all I need to see,
Then I know you had a good night's sleep; knowing all your dreams
Were sweet.

L.C.A.

HIS MAGIC

She was high as a kite
He pulled her down
deeper and deeper.
Now is my chance to
really sink her.
Hitting an air pocket, she
tried to fly, only HE could
control her invinsible high.
With one swift pull on the string
to her heart, he brought her down
And pulled her apart.

Caryl P. Taylor

DECEMBER 31

And now for my monologue or soliloquy. I'm throbbing with sadness. What a vague word. What level of sadness are you speaking of? A void. Not even pain is felt.

I remember Fridays when we tidied up the school room, we would later rest upon our desks and laugh over the simplest act. You always said you knew when I liked a joke especially well because my laugh was deep. It was more within me, a laughter that pleased me to feel it rather than to hear it. I was tired after the day's studies and then the work to ready the school room for Sunday school classes. My laughter was intended for me only, a rejuvenation of my weariness. So tonight if I were to laugh, I would laugh deeply.

Today I sat in a blue tweed and panelled middle-class living room. In the corner was a thin Christmas tree heavy with tinsel. And a star of tinfoil you made. I wanted to still need you, to be able to have our talks, and to boast that there'd never be a friendship like ours again. But I wished you a happy New Year as I left and knew I wouldn't share it with you. This void is not my loss of you, Jane, but what you took from me in greed of your own emptiness. I sat staunch on your couch refusing your tea, and imposing my questions. I'm not angry with your answers, only tired. I wish I could laugh.

I dreamed that I had a beautiful stone, and I didn't want to lose it or have it stolen. So I stitched it up inside of me, but I knew I couldn't keep it forever. A rape was all that was needed for you to have your desire. And now you walk about in your size too small jeans and talk about drinking bouts, never knowing your theft. You prod me to smile, to make the past just that, and hope it doesn't show its face up later. How can I grin at your complacency when all I ever want is more. All I want from you is a hug and sympathy, at least a moment of silence. But you sit there with tinsel wrapped around your slippers, puff on a cigarette, and toss out advice you'll never take. Couldn't you at least have touched? Couldn't you have given back some of what you'd taken?

You've detached yourself with your glib lifestyle. I have moved on, and away from you. I'm empty, but I know that I'll always laugh deeply, and it won't be for your satisfaction.

Denette Abers

I have come to realize that life has only those restrictions which we, ourselves, put on it. We are free to do with our lives whatever we are unafraid to do. If one is not afraid to venture away from those areas where he knows he can succeed — and at the same time is not afraid to face failure now and then — a whole new realm of experiences can be open to him. The limits to our boundaries of experiences are set only by the limits of our imaginations.

Monique Johnson

THE LIGHT

Bright is the light
that creeps ahead.
It pours a path of light
for you to follow
to find your dreams.

As you follow,
the light is lost
in the thick brush.
But it soon returns,
to lead you further on
to find your dreams.

Don't be frightened
by the disappearing light
it's there, you just can't
see it now.
It shall return soon,
even brighter than
when it left.
It leads and
you follow
to find your dreams.

Julia Reid

UNTITLED

A warm summer breeze combing sun streaked hair,
hands clasped in friendship with hints of something more.
Grains of sand slipping between the toes changing in
composition with every step. Rolling waves of white
water in low tides, calm and serene. A bright yellow
ball sinking down below the water line in the distance.
A glowing white crescent illuminating the sky, dotted
with stars shining, glimmering, twinkling above.

Sh. R.

ASTERISK

Affection beats in declining decibals
Toward silence and waits
Like an apparition that holds me secure
Until I'm ready to follow a muse
Through the quicksand of memories
And learn to paint the distance
In opaque colors
Even your face can't penetrate

Judy Woods

Dying Rose—Sentences For A Storm

Broken vases hold no water; no life for a dead rose.
Broken men hold no malice; no cause to inflict their thorns.
Tattered hearts drown in a bed of pain and drip scarlet darkness.
Tattered and tired minds feed on insipid loves and revenges.
Sticky fingers stick to these keys like flies on tape.

Wilting petals curl and fall with the sour wind of chapped voidness.
Searching for an image in a pile of Fall leaves melting into a spectrum;
Everything seems dead right before the first snow. Cold as pipe.
Corkboard guts hold lessons of adolescence.
Respectless vines snap with a tug, smiling at needs and perseverance.

A dying rose has little scent to allure with; maroon wrinkles that fray.

Nancy R. Levey

Original *Dying Rose* was
published by the National
Poetry Press, 1982.

Madrid, New Mexico



Photo by Marc Maron

WINDOW

The water gleams along the pane,
refracting light;
The forest's at my back.

There waves within my hair a maple bough;
Behind my eye, a cloud;
The forest's in my face.

Within the room is darkness visible.
Along the sofa dogwoods flower;
Green hemlocks wave where cabinets had stood.

My face is window glass,
One of the diamond panes of God.
We move in mirroring.

Fran Kohak

SPRING—HERALD OF THE NEW YEAR

O, that this hibernal sleep is finally o'er
And the warming rays have just begun to compress
The powdered snow, which blankets the forest's floor,
A migrant bird will sing for all to impress.
The trees, on which the budding leaves will grow
Present a miraculous change in their state,
Forming a curtain of brown, and green, and yellow.
For this transfiguration, they have had to wait.
A family of bears come from their hibernation,
And traverse through the budding woods for a meal.
The migrating birds will sing their melodies with elation;
As each small bird joins, their choir will start to peal.
For this is the herald that issues in a new year,
And this, the regeneration of life, will soon appear.

Brian S. Bubar

Published in National
Poetry Press
1981-82

OLDER, NO WISER, STILL IN THE SAME OLD BARS

For the most part the women danced badly,
And the music was tinny and loud.
Their heavy hips gyrated sadly,
And they played to the worst of the crowd.
In their eyes was the sparkle of money,
As each whispered the words of her song,
And I guess that it would have been funny
If I hadn't been down there so long.
Here a blond was the featured attraction,
At least she had her face on the door —
I arrived and the crowd's satisfaction
Was a big redhead out on the floor.
She was sprawled in a heap at stage center,
She swayed and she crooned to the skies,
And I wished that somebody would lend her
Some clothes; I averted my eyes.
I walked right on through to the crapper,
Which smelled like amonia and beer.
In the glass was a face not so dapper,
And I said, "What are you doin' here?"
But I knew, and I needn't have asked it,
And the face didn't need to reply.
I was there 'cause I couldn't drive past it —
(There are nights when I don't even try.)
I was there because once in Manhattan,
In a place not much different from this,
Stowed away, just sixteen, I'd been flattened
By a dancer who'd blown me a kiss.
Was she young? Yes, she'd looked about my age.
When she danced she left that bar behind.
She achieved in the place such an outrage
Of sweetness...Her shape was what God had in mind.
She danced on her own terms for boozers,
Any clown with a buck for a drink,
And I stood there surrounded by losers,
So amazed, only able to think
That her hair was the same shade as midnight,
And her eyes were the blue of the sea,
And her breasts were white doves in the moonlight,
And, by damn, she was dancing for me.
I cried out, and it drew the attention
Of a bouncer as big as a truck;
In less time than it takes me to mention

The man, I was out on the street, out of luck.
I doubt anybody else noticed,
I was too lost to put up a fight,
But she did, and her kiss, like a lotus
Blown softly, came after me into the night.

"And that's why," I'd have to have answered,
If I'd wanted to answer at all,
While the crowd cheered the red-headed dancer,
And I looked in the glass on the wall.
I suppose that might finish my story —
You could nod at what I had in mind:
A tale of the transience of glory,
And a goofy old fool left behind.
But I stayed where the women danced badly,
And I waited out most of the string.
If you like you can think of me sadly...
But I did see one hell of a thing.
She was more than a hard-working dancer;
She came out with a rush through the screen.
A far cry from the sloppy old prancers,
She wore skates...she was muscled and lean.
As she spun and she wheeled in the stage lights,
And peeled for the few who remained,
I smiled at the long road of dark nights,
And the giggle she'd put in the game.
Oh, she wasn't a dream or a vision,
As the sweat slicked her breasts and her thighs,
But she worked with such studied precision
That we laughed, and we clapped in surprise.
She was maybe the long-lost cheerleader,
Or the drum majorette on the bus,
Left behind by the team gone to seed, or
Gone weird, and performing for us.
In the lot when the last dance was over,
And the skater retired from the stage,
I thought of the silly old lover,
Who'd looked into the glass at his age,
And I wondered as morning got later,
Whether I could have smiled as a boy
At the hard-working, earnest, young skater;
I suppose there are seasons of joy.

Bill Littlefield

ALEXANDER FREEMAN

All proclaim the injustice of life.
The tears of one, the gleeful laugh of another;
They all bear witness to the uncertainty of all.
I was born out of wedlock
Bound by a blood disease that blinded me at fourteen.
Like a rug pulled out from under me
My legs went out at seventeen.
Though I had a wheelchair
It was motionless; and I lacked a companion.
For I was rejected because of my father's conduct.
One drunken winter night when, through a woman,
He punished himself for all his wrongs.
I, dying at twenty-eight, considered myself rich.
For in my youth I set my eyes on conquering life —
With love.
Though many are those who follow Jesus,
Few are those who know His secret of joy.
It is to love,
Free from the illusion of justice!

Alan G. Schaeffer

THE UNKNOWN GOD

It was getting late, time was passing by too quick for this to be happening. Seconds were ticking by along with minutes which turned into hours. The room was filled with steam. It was hot as an oven. Sweat dripped from foreheads as people looked on with eagerness. It was almost time for it to happen, the steam would clear and there would be someone in the center of the room. Nobody knew who it was or where they came from.

Here it came. You could hear it coming from a distance. The sound would carry the steam away and there the person would be. It sounded like a herd of horses or a stampede. Then it reached the room. It shook everything. The people's eyes started to blur because of the high winds. Then at last the steam cleared and the person was standing there by itself.

It had huge wings like a fly and a body of a lizard. Its head was of an ant and it had a tongue of a snake. When it landed everyone bowed at it like it was the king. It told the people that they were doing a good job and they could live for another week but if anything went wrong he'd be back.

With a flash of light and a roar, the steam came back to the room and everybody started talking as if nothing had happened. A door was opened and a voice said that it was time to go, so they lined up in single file and left the room of imaginations.

David Gillerlain

PROCRASTINATION

— No motivation — frustration
Feeling like life is going by on me.
So much to be done,
— No motivation — frustration
When will “reality” and dreams meet?

Thinking, thinking, and thinking,
Will it get me anywhere?
— No motivation — frustration,
Energy, from where?
To do or not to do,
Sit and think.

— Don't think — work!
Guilt.

Wanting to be great? or waiting to be great?
Were the great meant to be?
Or did they achieve it through pain?

P.F.C.

THE PIRATE'S PARADE

Off we go upon the loft
Which is the pirate's boat.
High up above many of us sway,
I'm surprised we stayed afloat.

Drinking and laughing
Everyone must do
And wear a bandana
On your head, too.

If the boat should start rocking,
Don't panic. Don't scream.
It's only the loft
Having a bad dream.

Enjoy. Enjoy.
Without a doubt,
Cuz this is what the Pirate's Parade
Is all about.

Lori Tvert



I
didn't
realize
that time
went so fast.
Now I realize
that seventy years
have passed.

Now
I spend
so much time
alone. No one
comes to see me,
I just sit home.

I miss all
the people
and all of the
fun. There's nothing
to do now. I've got no one.
I sit here in my old
chair. Oh, how I
wish someone was
here.

Now
that I'm
old, no one
cares about me.
If I would
just die, I
would finally
be
free.

D.R.

DADDY

Living with you all my life, and not knowing
you that well.
I'm the son of you and your wife, and I
have a story to tell.

Daddy, I need you so come home to me.
Daddy, I need you although you may not
see.
Daddy, I love you and that will never
change.
Daddy, you can't leave me, the house
would feel strange.

Things aren't quite clear, but the fog
shall drift away.
You have nothing to fear, so look for
Brighter days.

Daddy, you can't stop living.
Daddy, you should be giving.
Daddy, don't shut me out.
Daddy, what's it all about?

I really miss you, Daddy, but I never
thought I would have.
I didn't know it was that bad, but now
I know I should have.

Daddy, I need you and I want you
around.
Daddy, you can count on me when life has
got you down.
So keep your head high and remember me.
whenever you feel life's misery.

Allen Harrison

ASYLUM

Buried in the depths
of the impregnable cocoon
Clouds of smoke engulf
a molten lava moon

Time breathes so heavily
inside a sterile womb
Echoing the images
for the fire to consume

But somewhere in this universe
Psyche's running free
and swimming in the waters
of her own reality

Judy Woods

THE PLANETARIUM AT 6:38 PM

Hissing steam races from subway grates.
It separates couples, street level shoppers.
I sit beside planetarium walls of granite
Watching faces, roaches, and coppers.

The faces are blind to the Quarter Man
Who begs for change, condemns the war.
Business clad walkers watch only their steps
And smell the slowly moving poor.

A roach, whose legs are scorched by heat,
Dashes beneath the spray of the hydrant.
They carry the crumbs from wealthy strollers
And fumigation for the struggling migrant.

The angry old copper now spits in the station
And hassles young hookers with pinches.
He shivers while looks between the alley and traffic;
His trigger finger, knowingly, flinches.

The dusk descends as awnings rise.
Streets clear except for drunks and theatre life.
I walk toward home, stars guiding my way,
With a pain that switches like a knife.

Nancy R. Levey

I often stopped to ask why
when I saw his talents wasted.
And when I looked in those bloodshot eyes
I wished I had his first bottle tasted.

Then I looked at the hard times he had;
could I really blame him for it all?
His childhood was much too sad,
He just was not ready for their fall.

Memories of arguments between his parents,
He was never doing as well as he should;
Always holding things in, you could feel his tension,
so he started to drink; it made him feel good.

His drinks made it easier for him to forget,
as he drank his problems went away,
only to come back when sobriety set
he would drink and live life that way.

He was only seventeen years old;
never going a day without his drink,
He said it warmed his world so cold;
that was when I should have stopped to think.

But he and I knew inside
that he was much stronger, if only he would try.
I knew he could succeed with his powering pride,
then I'd look at him and could not help but cry.

It was a habit then, but he said no.
To him it was a need which he could discontinue.
He was quitting soon, at least he said so,
my heart wanted to believe but I knew it was not true.

I had done everything I could,
I had watched more than I could take;
Yet I could not give up, though I should,
I realized it was up to him, that was my mistake.

He finally agreed to try for me.
But said he had to be alone,
yet there he laid for me to see,
lifeless on that street of cobblestone.

Jody LaRosa

UNTITLED

A walk, a talk, a cry on a shoulder
Somebody who needs someone to hold her
A giddy, giggly, googley eyed girl
Who danced herself into a whirl
A mixed up, mental moment in time
That soon will pass and I'll be fine.
Growing up, going up, and getting up at last
Living for today, not future or past
Trying, crying, and prying my way
Searching for the right words to say
Needing, pleading, and seeding for the new
Wanting something to show when I'm through
Breaking, faking, but making me
All those things I wish to be.

Sally Maloney

Dismal skies.
Torrential rain came down
I looked down into a puddle in the street
The sun shone in
a new reflection of myself.

Edward Gault



Photo by Bil Bonanno

As I sit by the stream
 thinking of us,
A rock is thrown in the water
 the rings are seen fading.

As I sit by the stream
 thinking of us,
The thoughts remind me of the rings that have gone
 just like my love for you.

As I sit by the stream
 thinking of him,
A frog leaps onto a rock, and stays
 his eyes searching for a future.

As I sit by the stream
 thinking of him,
The thought reminds me of a future
 just like my hopes for he and I.

Lori Tvert

I TRIED AND I TRIED, BUT... To Noah Vale—

I tried and
 I tried, but,
to noah vale,
 I was just a child.

I wanted you to
 see that I loved
you — but all my efforts
 were to no avail.

Still, I try and
I try to love
 him, but
 to noah vale,
I am still a child.

Nancy Rita Lazzaro

TIME

The time that
passes by will
never make up
for when we
cried.

The lonely hours
spent thinking of
you is the
only memory that
helps me get
through.

And till the
day I die
I'll always spend
time loving you.

M.E.T.

Bullfight in Tijuana



Photo by Mark Maron

MELON BALLS

"Pass the melon balls, please."

"Pass the melon balls, please."

"May I have the melon balls, please."

"The melon balls. I'd like the melon balls. Please."

"Oh. I thought they were melon balls. I've never seen yellow cherry tomatoes."

"No. No thank you. I don't like tomatoes."

Why did I come here? I'm just not good at these things. I thought Aunt Beatrice's funeral was the worst, but this wins. I hate weddings. I should have known better. The bride isn't beautiful. I thought all brides were supposed to be beautiful. It's a law now, isn't it?

Amendment 242; Chapter 8: All brides are required to meet legal standards of beauty before applying for matrimonial papers.

And the ceremony.....it's enough to make you puke. Little flower girls drooling. The family crying so loudly you'd think John Kennedy had been re-assassinated. Someone choking in the first row. A stomach growl in B flat floating up from the third row. The minister forgot to wear his bottom set of choppers.

"Do you take...."

Jesus, I wouldn't take him if I were starving and he were the last submarine sandwich. Why did I come to this thing?

"She's your cousin. Be happy for her. She's got a nice man."

I figured there'd at least be lots of food here. Well, there's lots of liver pate, chicken salad, pickled watermelon rind and tomato aspic, but no food. Not even any cake; just a plate full of styrofoam pillers and plastic doves.

Why in Hell did I come? Never again. This is the last....

"No thank you. Really, I don't like tomatoes of any kind."

Meg Evans

PSYCHOTIC SLEEP

Night removes the darkness
from the hollows of my eyes
On the pretense that my holding you
could prevent the morning lies

The air, it melts so softly
when I breathe it through your skin
My hands know instinctively
they're touching home again

Illusions soon solidify
as the dawn begins to creep
Into the nightmare
of my sweet psychotic sleep

Judy Woods

THE PORCELAIN BUS

The dining hall at Curry is a fascinating place. You haven't experienced true college life until you have eaten there.

You enter into this big blue room, filled with cheap, old furniture. Slowly the smell of rotting garbage filters into your nose. Approaching the trays, you carefully avoid the lump of Jello on the floor. Carefully you pick a tray that is not still covered with dirty dish water.

The silverware tray can be a unique experience. You can't decide if you want to eat with space age plastic or stained "stainless steel." Tonight, we'll go with space age. Soon you find yourself standing in front of a rack of luscious desserts. On the top shelf you have some lumpy yellow slop with small black objects resembling raisins in it. Second shelf action consists of a choice of gray Jello or warm blueberry yogurt. And on the bottom shelf is the special of the day, last week's cookies.

Finally, I hit the main course. You're again presented with a big decision. What will it be — chicken so greasy it slides off the bone, or cold dried up macaroni. I guess I'll try the macaroni. And for vegetables, ahh my favorite — brown, green beans. Wow, this meal should be good!!

I suppose I'll have a coke to drink. That's an easy decision. Then you hit that beautiful salad bar. Lettuce, tomato, cottage cheese, pickles — who could ask for more. Sounds great, huh? But you still have to decide which dressing to use. Maybe the brown, oily sludge with the little seeds in it, or the white lumpy stuff. Sometimes they even offer that orange runny slime. Then you can top it off with some croutons with a little bit too much green on them.

Now I just have to give my meal card to the pleasant, cheerful woman sitting at the end of the line. She smiles shyly as she drops my I.D. in the lumpy white dressing.

I can finally eat. Boy, I'm glad I got this fine meal. Just think, in two hours I'll be riding high — on the porcelain bus!!

Laurie Driscoll

INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY

It may happen
some middle night
you'll awaken
and come to me
in depth and darkness.
we will meet,
as we have before
on a skyline —
some skyline of ocean.

Jo'anne M. Kelly

DEDICATED DIVER

The glistening sun reflects the pool,
As he saunters to the board, his only tool.
Dipping his toe, a chilling sensation,
This art he grasps brings total elation.
Balancing himself, his toes clutch the end,
Testing the spring, knees slightly bend.
Ready for the plunge and feeling alive,
Performed in perfection, a flattering nose dive.
The water breaks, this scene now not the same,
Filled with rings, a serene pool no longer tame.

Peggy Strange

SURROUNDED BY FOUR WALLS

Tonight I sit alone
Staring at the walls that surround me.
Wondering where you are and if you'll come home,
Somewhere the style of life that we've lived has gone wrong.

The coffee table has begun to collect dust,
My beautiful oriental rug now is a breeding ground for lint.
This is the room I once loved
Now all that is left are memories.

I stare into my glass that's filled with suppressants.
Anything that can help me make it through the night.
The curtains hang only to block out the world that continues
To grow.
No longer are they vivid blue, but stained by the sun and illness.

The last sip of my drink is always the best.
Gently the glass tumbles to the floor.
Why bother to pick it up, just kick it under the couch.
Our couch, the one which we once sat and would talk for hours.

Tonight I sit alone.
It really isn't unusual anymore,
Because you hardly ever come home.
Slowly I stagger up the stairs...

L.C.A.

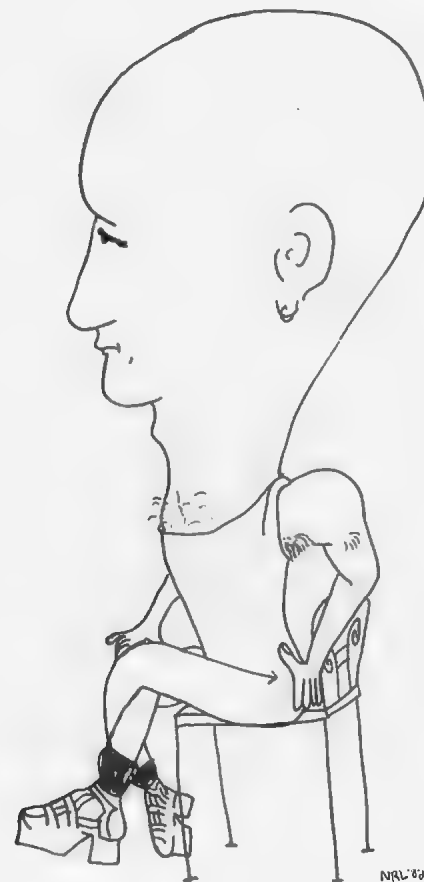
GEOMETRY OF LOVE

I must have gotten up
on the wrong side of my head,
I don't want to interrupt,
So continue what you said...
You love me and only me,
I'm the only one you want,
It's an irreversible inner need,
And it's caused you what you've got...
A heart filled to the top,
With a love I won't accept,
Instead you got those teardrops,
Making patterns on the steps.

You can't make her want you,
You can't make him understand,
You can't make a heart be true,
So you'll start learning to pretend.
The heart has no eyes,
It's blind to all who bleed,
But it can feel the cries,
Made by its own greed.
The heart has no eyes,
It's unkind to some who need,
It's blind to their tries,
Except in the braille of physical deeds.

I'll have to bring up,
The confession that you dread,
'cause my actions are abrupt,
and my feelings are unsaid...
I forgot to turn off my heart,
When I turned off my mind,
Now we're pulling apart,
'cause lust is so unkind,
It doesn't allow choice...
only uncontrollable fires,
It's infatuations' inner voice,
creating our unceasing desires.

Sally Brophy*



THE CHANGE

Those eyes,
Those eyes,
so full of love and delight
to change into passion
and hate
over night...

Caryl P. Taylor

THE RAPE

There was a danger. I felt it. I had walked these streets at night many a time. But tonight, somehow, it was different. Perhaps it was the lateness of the hour. I had gone to a midnight movie and now was walking home alone. The street lights glared. The sidewalks were nearly void of people. Sounds came mostly from an occasional car full of late night party goers and bar hoppers.

No, it was different. It wasn't the late hour. There was a dryness in my throat. My stomach was jumping up and down.

I turned my head around just enough to see a man walking maybe 30 feet behind me. I quickened my pace. Yet when I looked back again, his distance from me seemed just the same.

I slowed down and then stopped. I turned around. He had stopped, too. He was non-chalantly looking at a store window. Terror struck me. That man meant to harm me.

Energy surged through me. It was a hot mid-August night, but my fingertips felt like ice. I knew I had to think clearly and not panic. It was important not to box myself into a corner or a dark alley or a deserted street.

I started walking again. I looked back. He had begun to walk again as well. As I walked along the no-man's land of Boylston Street I knew I would have to make a decision soon. I thought of running once I got to the corner. But what good would that have done? It was still several blocks to my apartment building. The man was larger and undoubtedly stronger than I. If I turned down Hemmingway Street he could get me in the hallway of a building and no one would have answered my screams. If I chose the Fens, he could grab me, drag me behind a bush and no one would have heard my call for help.

I felt his power over me. I had to seize that power and defuse it.

I passed an all-night pizza parlor. Music blared from the juke box as I looked inside. It was 2:30 in the morning and the parlor was full of the baser elements of my neighborhood. Too drunk and sleazy looking for me.

I considered going in there for shelter. I could tell someone that a man was following me and that I was frightened for my life. But what good would that do? Considering the late night clientele, it just might be ignored. Or get snickers and grins. Or some slightly drunk man would come over, try to put his arm around me saying, "Don't worry honey, I'll protect you."

No. It was not the place to go for help. It angered me that there was no safe place to be. But I felt even more fear and weariness. I just wanted to go home.

I kept walking. And thinking. He kept following.

I reached the corner. A decision was necessary. Which way should I walk. I froze, hoping that this nightmare was just my paranoid fantasy, hoping that the man would just keep walking.

As I stood there he passed me, our eyes not meeting. He turned down Hemmingway Street. I watched. He turned, stopped for a brief second and looked at me. I felt his eyes ripping my clothes from my body. He turned around again and resumed his walking. He disappeared into the night.

I was safe. Or was I? He had walked down the street. Or had he? I sensed him hiding in the shadows, waiting, like a tiger stalking its prey, waiting for the right moment to pounce and devour.

I stood there and waited. Watching. Feeling the night air. Looking down the deserted street for a hint of a hiding beast. I heard a car coming. I hoped it was a squad car.

It was just a car. Another car passed from the opposite direction. Then another. No police.

I looked back at the pizza parlor. No. Not in there.

I looked down Hemmingway Street again. I saw nothing. I felt the cat. I wondered how long I would have to stand there, alone, on the street. I wanted to go home. But I knew I couldn't. And I knew that if I had to I could stand there all night waiting for the safety of the dawn.

I heard laughter and frenzied rock music drifting down the street from the pizza parlor.

Three drunken adolescents stumbled out of the shop, crossed the street, revved up the engine of their car and zoomed off.

Silence. A haunting stillness. Eternity. I stood there.

Footsteps. Coming towards me. A man.

A young man. Well groomed and collegiate looking. His pace was brisk and even.

I looked at him and conjured up a slight smile. "Excuse me. This may sound crazy to you but I'm frightened and I'd like to know if you could help me. There's a man whose been following me. No, you can't see him now. He disappeared. He's hiding around the corner in a doorway. At least I think he is. I'm frightened that he's planning to rape me. Could you help me, please?"

The young man was startled and somewhat taken aback by my greeting. I could hear him saying to himself, "What strange characters you meet late at night." But he respected my fear and showed concern.

"How can I help you?" he asked.

"Are you going to walk down the Fens?"

"Yes, I am. Why?"

"Would you mind if I walked with you?"

"I'll only be walking a short distance," he replied.

"Oh, that's okay. I'm sure that once he sees me walking with a man he'll go away. He won't follow us."

"Do you know this man? Is he a friend of yours?"

"No. I've never seen him before. But he's following me."

I sensed that the young man didn't really take my story seriously. After all he couldn't see a man hiding around the corner. But his chivalry was greater than his cynicism. He smiled, "Sure. You can walk with me."

I began to chatter nervously about standing on the street corner as we started to cross the street. Motion caught our eyes. The beast appeared from behind a doorway. He glanced at the two of us, turned around and disappeared into the night.

"You were telling the truth. There really was a man there."

"Yes," I said, feeling relieved that my attacker was gone and that the young man believed my story. "I guess it was hard for you to believe what I told you. You probably thought that I was crazy. I was in danger and you just may have saved my life."

"It was a rather strange story to believe."

"Yes, I'm sure. Most men don't really understand the fear that women have. Most women don't even sense the danger until it's too late. I guess I'm more sensitive to the danger because I used to work at a rape crisis center."

We began talking about other things. He was a student at MIT. He had been out visiting friends. He lived in a fraternity house on the Fens.

"Well, this is where I live. If you'd like to come in and rest for awhile, you can. You'll be safe here."

"Thanks. But no. I just want to go home."

"I'll walk you home then."

"Thanks for the offer. But I'll be okay. It's only another block or so. And I like walking alone."

"But will you be all right? Will you be safe?"

"Yeah. He's gone now. I'm just fine."

It was good walking home alone. I felt in control again.

I rarely thought about that episode again. I just chalked it off as a personal experience of one of the many dangers that a woman can face. That's why I always look over my shoulder and listen for footsteps when I walk home from the subway late at night. And why I always check the back seat of my car before unlocking the door.

But I did mention that experience to some friends one night. Ironically it was in mid-August four years later. Earlier in the evening I had joined 5,000 women in a march through the streets of Boston to "Take Back the Night." It was an exhilarating experience. We women sang and chanted and declared our right to walk the streets of our city without fear of attack.

After the march I met my lover. He had been doing childcare so that women with young children could march as well.

We met some other friends and went to see a midnight movie. On our way back from the movie we drove past that same pizza parlor. It was about 2:30 in the morning. Suddenly I found myself telling my story to my friends in the car. No one said a word.

I soon realized that my lover was driving me back to my house. I was surprised at this. I sensed a hostility on his part and asked him if we could go back to his place and talk. I started to cry. We went back to his place.

"Why were you taking me home?"

"Well you never told me that you wanted to stay with me and I didn't know what you were thinking. But when you told that story I really got bummed out at you."

"I don't understand. Why were you upset with me for telling that story?"

"Well, it didn't sound to me that you were in any danger. You were just imagining that you were in danger."

"I can't believe that you're saying this." Tears began to well up again.

"It seems to me that you really over-reacted to that situation."

Sometimes it really bothers me what women say. They brag about how they can't walk around at night. Like they've got this badge, 'I can get raped'."

"But women are raped. It's a consciousness that women have that you'll never understand. Maybe you fear being mugged. But the mugger just takes your money. The rapist takes a whole lot more."

"Look. I know women get raped. And it disgusts me. I just said that you over-reacted. You weren't in any danger."

"How do you know? Were you there? There was a man hiding in the shadows and I think he planned to rape me. And even fearing rape is valid, you know."

"Was there really a man there or did you just think he was there?"

"I told you. He was hiding and he only came out of hiding when I started walking with that other man. We both saw him."

"You mean he really reappeared?"

"Yes," I said with tears in my eyes. "I really can't believe this! How dare you make me defend myself. I was terrified. More frightened than I've ever been in my life. In my old anti-war days I faced cops and dogs and teargas and billyclubs. But this time I was alone and I WAS TERRIFIED. I stood on that street corner for what seemed to be over an hour not knowing if he had a weapon or not or if he was even there or if he was there and if I did start walking what would happen to me."

"Oh. I guess I didn't listen to your story very well the first time. I didn't understand that the man was still there. I guess I've got a few things to rethink."

"Yes. I think you do. I don't even know what the hell you were doing giving support to a women's march when you can't respect a woman's word!"

Tears. An avalanche. My tears. Coming and coming. Feeling violated. Like the woman who is told that she deserved to be raped because her skirt was too short or she was hitchhiking.

I wanted him to hold me in his arms. Or take my hand and tell me how proud he was of me for my strength. Nothing. He was like stone.

"Thank you for explaining things to me," he finally said.

We talked into the morning about various feelings and experiences. I cried on and off and got more and more anxious.

Depression and anxiety began to melt into anger. An unspecific anger. But definitely anger.

"May I borrow your hammer. I want to go outside and smash something."

"What?"

"I want to smash something with your hammer. I feel really angry."

"What about?"

"I don't know. But I'm real angry at something."

He smiled, opened his tool kit and handed me his hammer.

We both went outside to scrounge for some wood.

The first piece I got was too narrow. I kept missing the wood and denting the driveway. I found a 2 by 4. I smashed and smashed it shattered under my force.

I felt better then.

We didn't make love together that day.

In fact, we never slept together again.

S. Jane Albert

STRATA

Hey, God.
If you are there.
Save us from the American way of terminal despair.

No, I don't care about your hair. Jesus, so
what if you left the curlers in all night, you
haven't got a prayer.
Welcome to the overweight housewife stage of
the great American dream.
No thanks, I don't take cream. I'll drink
mine black. Jesus, look at the ass on that
broad, I'll betcha she's great in the sack.
Where the hell have you been, it's about time
you got back. I went out and had a drink with
the boys.
What other than America can we thank for all
these joys, along with baseball, apple pie,
and Chevrolet. We need not forget secretaries,
who really work for their wages.

Hey, God.
If you are there. The people don't care.
This whole scenario doesn't seem fair.

Dad, I'd like you to meet Lucy. Me and her
are gettin' married, we're gonna do everything
I can afford. It doesn't matter though, her
dad is chairman of the board. What it all
comes down to is I'm gonna be a father soon.
I just don't know if I can cope, I don't know
if I can win this bout. Maybe a few pointers just
to help me out.
Hey dad, do you know what I mean. Maybe you
don't
You weren't gonna be a father when you were
seventeen.
Who are we to thank for this fine slice of
life.

It sure is great, this U.S.A. of ours.
Oh, I'm sorry, did you want some more hors
d'oeuvres, twelve year old scotch, maybe some
fine champagne? Charles, could you get some
more caviar?
It is scary to think we've come this far.

Hey, God.
If you are there.
Why does it seem that you don't care?

Marc Maron

THE REINCARNATION OF A LIMP ROSE BUSH

Cull the buds of a dying rose bush.
Cutting of life free warmth.
To coldly crawl as the slug and
Staunchly defend ragged edges of dead flowers;
Aromas suffocate in pillows of mulch.

Kinked petals pressed in memory books of glass.
Search stems of bubbling thought
To receive daily allowances of cultivated soil.
Frozen sleet impail a shuddering leaf that strives.
Roots spread; the plant grows sturdy as it gravitates.

The reincarnating of a rose is stable, allowing sweet pollen to float.

Nancy R. Levey

SACRIFICIAL

An inability to let go
Feeds upon the violence;
Yet we listen for the sighs
In ever thickening silence.

There's a demon in the doorway
And we become its prey—
Trying to regain emotion
The claws have ripped away.

A tapestry of bitterness
Cloaks an empty ceiling
Like the arms that hold my body
In the absence of all feeling.

The demon's in our bedroom
Wreaking with desire
To prevent the ash of passion
From becoming another fire.

Judy Woods

MANUFACTURED PHILOSOPHY

On a day as this
it is said that you can see forever,
only on this day;
the tears of illusion no longer
dangle up above,
but stand before life's eyes.

As a barrier that lets go only to evil,
or some HEAVENLY sainted spirit that
never grasped that pot of gold.

Jo'Anne M. Kelly



Photo by Bil Bonanno

THE GAME

We watched,
 we looked.
He was up at bat.
We wanted to play,
we had nothing to do.
They turned us away.
We had no talent,
 we were different.
The umpire yelled,
the batter was out;
so were we, with nothing to do.
We don't know how to play the game;
not just their game,
 the whole game.
We come out losers,
 by a set of rules where the scores are predetermined.
The game is over.
I gave a sigh,
 and looked across the field.
They were leaving;
 bats swung over their shoulders,
 sweat running down their faces,
 laughing and cheering.
We walked away.
As I looked back,
 I saw that they were gone.
"Just as well," I thought, "Screw them!"

Edward Gault



SPIDER'S WEB

Slowly from the
Corner he creeps
followed by a
thin silver thread
that intricately weaves
the spider's soft web

Busily he works
not stopping, even
for a moment's rest,
for when he's done
nothing will be as
awesome as the
beauty seldom seen
by anyone.

M.E.T.

DON'T LEAVE WITHOUT KNOWING

I met you in a casual way, it was
nothing outstanding.
Staying Al from day to day, wasn't very
demanding.

When your eyes met mine, there was
a grain of attraction.
But I overlooked that sign, and
gave you no reaction.

Then I was given a hint, and I
followed it to see
If the hint really meant, we could
ever be.

Now I know you may be leaving,
but that's okay,
Because I'll keep believing that
you're gonna stay.

It's kind of odd, but not half bad,
and I promised myself I wouldn't
be had.
I hope you'll say you're not going,
because you'll have left without
knowing.
Oh babe, you'll have left without
knowing.

Be true to what you feel, and be
true to me.
Another broken heart I can't heal,
So come and be with me.

I couldn't hurt you if I tried, and
Girl I never will.
Right now my hands are tied, free
me and your emptiness let me fill.

Who's right, who's wrong, we must
answer this together.
For your love I will always long
because I know my life can be
better.

Do what you must, but do it fast;
because my love you can always trust,
and it will never pass.

So come on, let go, and keep your love for
me growing.
Please don't say no, and don't leave with-
out knowing.
No, don't leave without knowing I love
you.

Allen Harrison

FROM FAMILY TO FAMILY

The storm is blowing fiercely,
the rain is falling heavily,
the trees sway back and forth,
and the gray clouds are getting darker.

The time ticks away
as a person sits waiting,
to hear how he is
but they won't know 'till tomorrow.

She sits by the phone,
Hoping to be near him.
Yet she is miles away,
though her thoughts are right there with him.

Finally she is on her way again,
and she is sitting by his bed,
there are so many memories in her head,
so many things she wants to say,

But he can no longer hear her,
and it's been such a long time
since they have seen each other.
Twenty or thirty years; maybe more.

Except for the other's funerals;
at those times it was much too hard to talk.
And now she is with him but miles away.

Well she came home yesterday; she is so strong.
But you know her much better,
and only you see the tear in her eye.

As you walked in her room tonight,
you saw the tears falling. As you talk to her,
you realized how alone she really feels.

She is the only one left,
yet she has seven children of her own.
She feels all alone in this big world,
for her family of eight is gone.

So you hold her close
and tell her that you love her,
and you wish there was something,
if not anything you could do.

Now the time has ticked another month away,
and now you are so far away,
but your thoughts are right there with her.

Jody LaRosa

MEMORIES OF LOVE

I would think by the smile on your face
By the touch of your skin, whenever I'm taken in.
That all would preside, not even a moment to hide.

For all those that continue to crawl,
The dissection of man upon the cold slab,
Circumcised by the feel of a frozen stonewall.

I'll continue to be only what I shall see.
Though my ways may take your world by storm,
Never to leave any remnants of an everlasting past.

So whenever you think of me
Remember the feel of my body,
The touches and warmth created inside.
It's all an illusion implanted in the mind.

L.C.A.

THE DREAM

I awake from a deep sleep. Where am I? How long have I slept? I am sitting, but something, somehow is preventing my movement. I open my eyes and look about me. I see the makings of a small craft, sleek and futuristic. I have been strapped in what is apparently the driver's seat. Outside there is nothing, simply black as if I'm suspended in space. But wait, the craft begins to move, ever so slowly at first—then with every passing moment a bit faster—and still faster, 'till in a minute I am moving at the speed of sound. As I notice the craft peak off in speed, I feel a sudden impact as if I've struck something. The structure of the craft begins to fold before my eyes slowly, as if in slow motion. Bent metal and shattering glass is all I see. I am unconscious.

I awake from a deep sleep. Where am I? How long have I slept? I am sitting, but something, somehow is preventing my movement. I open my eyes and look about me. I see the makings of a small craft, sleek and futuristic. I have been strapped in what is apparently the driver's seat. But wait, now I realize this is but a dream within a dream. I don't know how or why, but somehow I know I have been locked within a mental cycle, and this plot or mental construct will continue to repeat itself as it did the first time throughout eternity. I am caught in a state of unconscious life, jailed for eternity somewhere outside of time and space.

Victor Knize

Drop Drip Drip II

The loud earth-shaking booms got louder, closer and intensified with every movement, every step. The huge hulking mass of tangled fur was distinguishable by its red glaring eyes and massive, ivory, blood-stained fangs. It stood about ten stories tall and could crush street lights and cars with one step like they were aluminum soda cans or the half pint milk containers served in school. Sometimes it would just rip the street lights out of the ground and crack them in half over its knee. A sound much like deafening thunder would fill the air. The hairy beast punched holes in the buildings and grabbed terrified, screaming victims and popped them inbetween those massive fangs. The blood squirted about and then . . .

Drop

Drip

Drip.

Trickling down the bottom lip, clinging to its hairy chin, and then dripping further.

Also heard was the sound of the bones crushing in its grasp. The monster played with its victims as they pleaded for mercy and then . . . in one split second they were gone.

Crunch Crunch Crunch.

Drip

Drip

Drip.

The beast continued on down the street smashing, crunching, reeking of blood, death, and destruction.

Sh. R.



Photo by Marc Maron

THE THRIFT SHOP

Palms hung languidly in the sun along the driveway in front of the high-school, veiling the quadrangle where several mothers were parked waiting for the bell. One of the women, in a baby blue Cadillac, was flipping through the pages of a magazine, another had her chin on her arm and was resting on the steering wheel watching the building over her sunglasses, while a third shifted uncomfortably when too much sweat collected between her skin and the plastic seat of her car. A few students trickled down the main steps of the building and the schoolbuses were beginning to collect in yellow shimmering pools in the parking-lot.

As the bell sounded, a tall girl came through the doors and squinted towards the quadrangle. Then she reached up and pulled her sunglasses down over her eyes, letting her long hair loose over her cheeks. As she stood, she slipped her sandals off and dropped them into a straw bag which hung over her arm. Then she looked up and caught sight of the car and started down the steps in a rhythmical dance, putting her hands in the pockets of her wrinkled, white linen skirt. As she approached the car, her mother saw her in the rearview mirror and leaned over to unlock the door. The girl slid into the front seat, and tossed her bag into the back.

"It's finally a weekend," the girl said, and leaned back stretching her legs in front of her. She looked at her mother. "Another fight in school today. Black girls in the library, with scissors. Nothing happened though. Somebody stopped them in time. It sure wasn't the principal, though. He's too afraid to even see them in his office, won't even suspend them from school, he's such a phony."

The woman tilted the mirror towards her and adjusted her sunglasses.

The girl said, "Can you believe that? He wouldn't even call them to his office and suspend them." The woman turned towards her, not speaking. "Remember? I told you this happened once before," the girl said.

The woman took a set of keys from her lap and put one in the ignition, then reached over and slid the air-conditioner button to "on." "We should call the school board about him," the woman said. "That's terrible." She pumped the gas pedal. "At least when I taught in New York I could send the kids to the office, rather than spending all of my time trying to discipline them." She looked over at the girl. "He's really afraid to see them?" she asked.

The girl rolled the last inch of the window down and stuck her elbow out. "God it's hot. Can we get going?" Her mother sat still for a moment, then turned the key and started the car.

"I just have to stop somewhere for a minute," she said, stretching around to look through the back window. She reversed slowly.

The girl frowned, and drew her arm across her forehead.

"I'm only going to the Salvation Army, to drop some stuff off," her mother continued. "It'll only take a minute." They stopped at a traffic light.

"It's too hot," the girl said. "Look. My legs are already dripping." She wiped her calf and held her palm towards her mother. Then she dropped her hand into her lap, and looked out the window. "I wish I could take this shirt off."

"I wish you wouldn't wear my silk blouses to school," the woman said. A car pulled up beside them. A man with a double chin was holding tightly to the steering wheel. The girl looked away. "Can't we go home," she said.

"I've been trying to get this done all week," her mother said, maneuvering into the traffic. A car behind them honked. "So if I could just get this done while we're out. It's right around the corner."

The girl put her fingers out into the breeze. "The Home-Ec teacher," she said, "had to go up and stop the fight. She's the only one the blacks like. I mean, they don't even like the black teachers. It's because she's the only one that isn't afraid of them. Shit," she said. "I'd hate it if everyone were afraid of me, although sometimes they scare me, too. Like yesterday. This black girl pulled some girl's tube-top off in class, 'cause some black guy had talked to her. The girls don't like it when their boys talk to white girls." They pulled up in front of a whitewashed building that had "Thrift Shop" painted in even green letters across the glass. "They don't want to be special," she said. "They just want to be told to stop, like everybody else."

"I don't know," her mother said. "I'm glad I'm not teaching anymore." Then she said: "Take your feet off the dashboard. I don't suppose you'll put your shoes on to go inside."

In the shop, three large fans were droning in separate corners. The woman behind the counter was fanning her face with a piece of cardboard. "Some day!" she announced.

The girl's mother said: "Isn't it something?" She looked around the room. "At least you have fans," she said. "But I'd put one by the door, if I were you. It brings in the air."

Behind the counter, the woman nodded slowly. "Was that your daughter that just went in back? She sure is pretty. Looks just like you." She continued fanning her throat.

The girl's mother smiled. "Thank you," she said. She lifted a garbage bag onto the counter. "I brought you some stuff today. You can go through it. Some of it's pretty bad, I'm afraid, and I'm not sure you'll want it." She laughed.

"Oh, we'll take just about anything." She waved the comment away with her hand. "You'd be surprised at what people buy outta here."

The girl weaved her way through the tables in the back of the shop,